27th August 1955]

* *Short Notice Question No.* 22.—SRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that a large number of workers belonging to the Madurai Thermal Station was stopped from work during May 1955;

(*b*) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(*c*) whether the workers have since been taken to duty?

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" (*a*) Yes, Sir.

" (*b*) The work in the Thermal Station is seasonal in character as it is intended only to give relief to the hydro-electric stations in the State during the summer months. Hence the majority of the workers required for the working of the station are employed on daily wages from time to time and they are disbanded when the station shuts down. They are employed on the understanding that surplus hands will be retrenched to the extent necessary when the station shuts down. The retrenchment of workers became inevitable this year when the station closed down as a result of the favourable monsoon conditions and the satisfactory storage in the hydro-electric reservoirs.

" (*c*) Only ten workers have been taken back. The question of taking back more workers will arise only when the station begins functioning again. Efforts are made to offer employment to the retrenched workers in nearby places."

SRI K. P. GOPALAN :—" May I know from the Hon. Minister whether the Government are aware of the fact that under the provisions of the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act, whenever people have to be retrenched, persons who have put in more years of service should be retained and people who have put in less years of service should only be retrenched. That is the statutory provision made, Sir, in the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act. May I know from the Hon. Minister whether it is a fact that workers who have put in more years of service have been retrenched retaining workers who have put in less years of service and if this is not a violation of the provisions of the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act which the Government themselves have enacted? May I know what action has been taken by the Government in this matter? "

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" I have already stated that workers have been employed only on a temporary basis. About the retrenchment of workers who have put in more years of service while retaining workers who have put in less years of service, there has been no mention of that aspect. It is generally believed that senior members are retained and that only people who have been recently employed are sent out on occasions demanding such retrenchment."

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SRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM :—" மதுரை தர்மல் ஸ்டேஷன் பாக்டரி சட்டத்தின் கீழ் வரக்கூடிய ஒரு ஸ்டேஷன். அதிலிருந்து தொழிலாளியை நீக்குவதாயிருந்தால் வேலையை விட்டு நியாயமானதாக இருந்தாலும் பாக்டரி சட்டத்தின் கீழ் சர்விஸ் அடிப்படையில் தான் நீக்க வேண்டும். குறைந்த சர்விஸ் உள்ளவர்களை முதலில் நீக்கிவிட்டு பிறகு தான் சர்விஸ் அதிகமுள்ளவர்களை நீக்க வேண்டும். ஆனால் எங்களுக்கு வந்திருக்கும் விவரங்களின்படி பார்த்தால் அதிக சர்விஸ் உள்ள தொழிலாளர்களைத்தான் அவர்கள் தொழிற் சங்கத்தில் ஈடுபட்டு வேலை செய்கிறார்கள் என்ற காரணத்திற்காக வேலையை விட்டு நீக்கியிருப்பதாகத் தெரிகிறது. அதற்காகத்தான் இந்தக் கேள்வியே போடப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. ஆனால் சர்விஸ் அதிகம் உள்ளவர்களை வேலையை விட்டு நீக்கியிருக்கிறார்களா இல்லையா என்கின்ற விவரம் கனம் மந்திரி அவர்களுக்குத் தெரியவில்லை என்று சொல்லுகிறார்கள். ஆகவே இதை தொழில் மந்திரி தான் கவனிக்க வேண்டுமென்று விட்டுவிடாமல் இவர்களே இதைப்பற்றி விசாரித்து ஆவன செய்வார்களா என்று அறிய விரும்புகிறேன்."

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" I have already told the House that I have no information if any senior workers have been stopped. I shall make an enquiry into the matter and call for an explanation if there has been a treatment of the kind mentioned by the hon. Member here."

Public holiday on the 17th March 1955

* 2319 *Q.*—SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the High Court was informed that Government had declared the 17th of March 1955 a public holiday; and

(*b*) the reason for the declaration of that date as holiday?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" (*a*) & (*b*) Yes, Sir. The High Court was informed that the 17th March 1955 would be observed as a holiday for Government offices in the City of Madras on account of the funeral of the late King Tribhuvan of Nepal. It was not, however, declared a public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act."

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR :—" Could the Hon. Minister enlighten me as to whether this holiday was observed by the High Court? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" No, Sir. The High Court did not observe it as a public holiday."

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR :—" Obviously since this matter was one of national respect done by this country to a neighbouring State, may I point out that the High Court of Madras cannot claim to be different from the country as such in these matters of national importance? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" In this case, the High Court received the information very late. Therefore, they could not declare it as a public holiday. It was not intended to be any disrespect to the departed soul."